GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2684
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2003
PROTECTION OF TRIBALS
MANSINH PATEL;MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the most of the tribals in the country particularly in Gujarat mainly depend on the forest products for sustaining their livelihood;

(b) whether the tribals are denied access to forest products by forest guards taking shelter of various laws and exploit the tribals particularly the women;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any survey in this regard;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures Government propose to take to allow tribals unhindered access to forest products?

Answer

MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM)

(a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests have informed this Ministry that the tribals inthe country, including those from Gujarat, depend on jungle products for sustaining their livelihood to some extent only. The State/UT Government have also furnished similar information.

(b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests have clarified to the State Governments that theprovisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 do not affect the enjoyment of recorded rights/concessions of local people especially tribals for their own bona fide domestic use. The majority of the State/UT Governments have also informed this Ministry that tribals have freeaccess to jungle products and there is hardly any exploitation of tribals including women, on this account.

(c) & (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests have pointed out that the subject `forest`being in the concurrent list, the role of that Ministry is more related to the policy issues whereas the responsibility of its actual management and protection vests with the State Governments. The survey on exploitation of tribals is an issue to be dealt by the State Governments and, as such, no data is compiled and collated in that Ministry. The information received from the State/UT Governments reveals that no such survey has been conducted by them in this regard.

(e) In view of the position stated in reply to part (b) of the Question above, this question does not arise.